



USDA Forest Service – Southern Region
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests
GEORGIA



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Issue: Wilderness and Roadless Areas on the National Forest

Background:

On the Chattahoochee National Forest, which stretches across 749,546 acres of the North Georgia mountains, there are 10 congressionally designated wilderness areas totaling 114,537 acres. This represents about 15% of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Wilderness lands are managed to preserve their Wilderness character and for their use and enjoyment as wilderness. To balance human use and enjoyment with the preservation of the wilderness resource is a challenge for land managers.

Four separate pieces of legislation established the wildernesses on the Chattahoochee National Forest. Following are the years each law was passed and the wilderness it established:

- 1975 Wilderness Act—Ellicott Rock and Cohutta Wilderness
- 1984 Wilderness Act—Southern Nantahala and Big Frog
- 1986 Wilderness Act—Raven Cliffs, Brasstown, Tray Mountain, Rich Mountain
- 1991 Wilderness Act—Blood Mountain, Mark Trail

The Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 describes wilderness as:

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.

Except as otherwise provided in this Act, wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historical use.

In the recently released Land and Resource Management Plan, there are 11 areas that have been identified as “Recommended Wilderness” by the U.S. Forest Service. These areas, totaling over 8,000 acres are: Ben Gap, Cedar Mountain, Duck Branch, Ellicott Rock Extension, Foster Branch, Helton Creek, Ken Mountain, Shoal Branch, Tate Branch, Tripp Branch, and Wilson Cove.

These areas are all adjacent to existing wilderness on the Chattahoochee National Forest. The Forest Service recommends these areas to Congress to add to the wilderness system. These areas will be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics pending legislation as to their classification.

The Roadless Areas that were not placed into the 'Recommended Wilderness' prescription were placed in a variety of other prescriptions that will maintain the nature and character of the area. The majority of these areas were placed into the Backcountry Recreation Prescription. Roadless areas will be managed to maintain the unique characteristics that make them roadless. None of these areas will be managed to change their roadless designation.

For additional information about this issue, contact: Larry Lockett (770) 297-3033 or Karen McKenzie at (770) 297-3061